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SUBJECT: SENEGAL-PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MAKES PEACE WITH PRESIDENT WADE

REF: A) Dakar 2287 B) Dakar 2437 C) Dakar 2438

¶1. (SBU)Summary: With the mediation of the brand new Caliph-General of the Mouride Brotherhood, Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade and National Assembly speaker Macky Sall have apparently patched up their differences. What remains unclear is if this detente is a case of forgive and forget or just a postponement of Sall's eventual ouster from his parliamentary perch. What is clear is that the National Assembly will become even more dominated by President Wade.
END SUMMARY.

Divine Intervention

¶2. (SBU) Last weekend President Wade received Macky Sall following a complicated mediation process managed by Serigne Bara Mbacke, the new Caliph-General of the Mouride Brotherhood. Serigne Bara sent his brother, the current Senegalese Ambassador to Kuwait, Serigne Abdou Lahad Mbacke, and another one his disciples, Minister of Mining and Industry Macicke Niang, to intercede on behalf of Macky Sall, who had earlier asked the now deceased former Caliph, Serigne Saliou Mbakce, to assist him in solving his problems with Wade to calm tensions at the summit of the State. After meeting the two emissaries from Touba, the capital of Mouridism, President Wade received Sall whereupon the two men agreed to end hostilities that began in June when the National Assembly's Finance Commission called the president's son Karim Wade lead National Agency for the Organization of the Islamic Conference (ANOCI) to testify before it.

In a press statement following the meeting, presidential nephew and PDS (Democratic Party of Senegal) parliamentary group leader Doudou Wade, who had been leading the attack to have Sall ousted, announced that the hatchet had been buried upon the personal intervention of Serigne Bara.

So Is It Really Over?

¶3. (SBU) Embassy contacts close to Wade, Sall and the marabouts in Touba told Poloff that this fight is far from over and that Wade, who is a Mouride, had to go through the motions of forgiving Sall in order not to offend the Mouride Caliph. In reality, this is a short reprieve and Wade remains committed to ousting Sall from his job as head National Assembly before his constitutionally mandated five-year term. In a press statement Minister of Transportation Farba Senghor, said that even if the President was magnanimous enough to forgive Sall, the party would not. Senghor is known to speak for Wade and this message bodes ill for Sall.

The Caliph Steps In

¶4. (SBU) According to an Embassy contact, Abdou Fattah, a politically connected half-brother of Serigne Bara, played a role in putting pressure on Caliph-General Serigne Bara to make this rather early and risky intervention in political affairs. Serigne Bara's

predecessor refrained from performing such a role, when it became clear in the electoral tensions of the 90s that the disciples wish to see a separation of the spiritual and temporal functions in the brotherhood. Although, in what could be interpreted as the last act of dying man to secure peace in his country, when he met Macky Sall a few days before passing away, Serigne Saliou told him that it was his wish for this fight to end between the two men. For Serigne Bara this was calculated risk as he gains in showing that he is in charge and that Wade adheres to his guidance as he did with the previous caliph-general. This was a first and successful test of his authority and shows those who doubted it that his authority will be not be any less than that of previous Caliphs-General. However, many fear that, unlike his predecessor, if he chooses to interfere in political matters, he may expose himself to criticism and controversies and this may undermine his rule. In the coming weeks, the choice of the men in his entourage and their influence on his decisions will indicate if Bara plans to remain actively involved in Senegal's personality-driven politics.

Comment

¶5. (SBU) This crisis between Wade and Sall, or more importantly between the President and the National Assembly has been a dominant and distracting feature of recent political developments for all the wrong reasons. This latest twist is certainly not the final chapter in this mini-epic as Wade is known to settle all of his scores. Meanwhile, the intervention of Serigne Bara, a week after becoming Caliph-General, seems to indicate that he may be more willing to get involved in the country's affairs than his predecessor and marks a bold start to his Caliphate.

Mullally